



## SOCIAL FACTORS INFLUENCING SPORT PARTICIPATION AMONG SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS IN OYO WEST LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA OF OYO STATE, NIGERIA

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### **Abstract**

*The study was conducted to investigate the social factors influencing sport participation among secondary school students in Oyo West Local Government Area, Oyo State. A descriptive survey research design was adopted for the research; the population of the study was all 10,385 secondary school students in Oyo West Local Government, Oyo State. Multistage random sampling technique which included purposive, proportionate and random sample techniques were used to select 642 of the students. The instrument for data collection was a researchers-designed questionnaire, validated by experts and the reliability coefficient was  $r = .76$ . Data were analysed using descriptive statistics of frequency and percentage for the demographic characteristics and inferential statistics of chi-square was used to test the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. Results of the study indicated that the following factors: parental influence  $n = 642$ ,  $\chi^2 (9) = 505.321 > 16.92$ , sport facilities  $n = 642$ ,  $\chi^2 (9) = 455.184 > 16.92$ , gender  $n = 642$ ,  $\chi^2 (9) = 331.588 > 16.92$ , and economic status  $n = 642$ ,  $\chi^2 (9) = 447.408 > 16.92$  significantly influenced sport participation among secondary school students in Oyo State. It was concluded that sports participation among secondary school students is greatly influence by these social factors. Therefore, it is recommended that parents should encourage their children to participate in sports, and the government should support the school authorities in provision of adequate sport facilities for schools. Equal opportunities should be provided for both male and female students to fully participate in sports.*

**Key words:** Fitness, Health, Social Factors, Sport, Wellbeing

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### **Introduction**

Human beings have enjoyed participating in sports since ancient times, as exemplified by the Greek Olympic Games. Information obtained from ethnographic and archaeological records of early European explorers confirms that sports are as old as man [16]. Sports can be defined as all forms of physical activity that enhance physical fitness, mental wellbeing and social interaction, such as play, recreation, organized or competitive sport and indigenous sports and games [1]. The importance of sport as one of the most reliable means to overcome the constraints of physical, emotional, social and psychological stress cannot be over emphasized in modern life. Research has shown that people who

participate in sport regularly are more physically fit than others who participate less. Those who do not participate in sport and are sedentary for a major part of their days have a higher risk of experiencing physical and health challenges including higher levels of stress, less confidence during their life time; which might impede their ability to cope with the demands of life [11,22]. Sport participation is an essential component of the planning process in various aspects of life including educational activities, culture and occupation. As such, it is has become one of the most important programmes in schools today that should be used to promote all round development of secondary school

students in Oyo West Local Government Area and other parts of Nigeria.

Participation in sporting activities helps to increase cognition, muscular strength, bone density, motor and aerobics capacities, control child obesity, reduce high blood pressure and fatigue. Olanipekun and Akindutire [20] indicated that many people who suffer from degenerative circulatory disorders tend to eat diets high in fat and cholesterol, become overweight, live under emotional stress and fail to participate in regular exercises or sports. Participating in sport helps the participants stay in shape, improve endurance, boost self-esteem and maintain a healthy body weight. Socially, sports bring secondary school students together from different schools, backgrounds and communities and gives their parents the opportunity to appreciate one another. Through sport interactions, children boost friendships, teamwork and build relationships with their peers and even adults; a practice which can considerably enhance unity and the development of the Oyo West Local Government Area. In addition, by providing wisdom and encouragement through sports, coaches and teachers in secondary school can be very good role models and the relationship developed with them would be very important to the success of the students as it pushes them to achieve peak performance levels physically and even academically [5]. These benefits reinforce the need for all schools to encourage sport participation among students and staff as an important strategy to promote being physically active, which is crucial for improving and maintaining health and wellbeing in Nigeria [2].

Participation in sport encourages individuals to become active by engaging in exercise and other forms of physical activity. People who develop the behaviour of being physically active as children have a greater tendency of carrying it into adulthood, living healthily, and keeping fit with all-round optimal life performance than those who did not. This was emphasised by Roy [21] who reported that exercise stimulates the growth of cerebral blood vessels, enhances communication across synapses, boosts mood and act as a natural antidepressant, augments

memory and increases brain density. Apart from enhancing learning and academic performance in school children, exercising regularly also promotes a graceful aging process with improved maintenance of cognitive function [21]. Therefore, participation in sport is important to improving the academic performance of students because it eases the stress of academic work, boosts focus and refreshes the brain for greater cognitive effectiveness.

Certain social factors emanating from the individual; their culture, society and family, influences sport participation among adults and children. It has been found that culture and tradition, age, gender, economic status and parents are significant social factors which influence participation in sports [5, 19]. Being the first point of socialization, the family largely influences the entire experience of the child determining his/her early perception about life. Parents play a principal role in their children's sport and physical activity participation due to the influence of modelling, financial and psychological supports. However, parents who are not interested in sport affect their children negatively [6].

Another important factor constituting a barrier to sport participation among secondary school students is the lack of high standard or well-maintained and accessible playgrounds. Most schools do not have their own sport facilities and equipment; even if any are available, they are often inadequate, sub-standard or poorly maintained [7]. Economic status, which includes both resource-based and prestige-based measures are linked to social class positions among both children and adults. The economic status of a child directly reflects the economic status of his/her parent and has significant effects on sport participation due to the inability to afford the costs of membership in a sports club, sport apparel, transport to sport venues and sport equipment. Socioeconomic status determines the affordability of parents, thus affecting their child's sport participation and performance [23]. This means most children with great sport potentials may not be able to pursue their vision in sport due to challenges and setback of low economic status experienced early in life. Most parents prefer to

devote their little resources to their children's education since the dominant belief of society is that sport could be a distraction from serious academic work.

Starting from childhood, several gender-related reasons influence sports participation as it has been indicated that females usually participate in sport less frequently than males [17]. Unlike males, the female child often has more domestic responsibilities that keep them busy at home. In addition, the fear of assaults, being raped, and cultural and religious perceptions all serve as barriers to female participation in sport. The low rate of women participating in sports is not due to lack of interest but societal restrictions through direct and indirect forms of discrimination and stereo-typing concerning activities that involve strenuous physical exertions [4, 18]. Furthermore, psychological barriers to a student's participation in sport exist. These include role conflict, low self-esteem and body image or absence of role models and fear of injury. Some students see themselves as not having the skills; as such they do not have the courage to participate in sport. It is commonly known that some of the skills required to overcome these psychological barriers can be developed and mastered during adolescent years where schooling has a fundamental effect on children. Teachers and peers have been very crucial to providing support towards developing individuals' talents [13]. Nonetheless, differences in the effect of these barriers may continue to dwarf the number of students who participate in sport. Therefore, it is important to identify the specific implication to these social factors in order to increase sport participation among secondary school students.

#### Statement of the Problem

Sports have become a vital tool for individual and community development. Children who participate in sport are fitter, healthier, perform better academically and are more active as adults. This helps in maintaining better social interaction, occupational efficiency and less risk of chronic diseases and mortality rate. Despite these benefits, the researchers observed that several secondary school students in Nigeria, especially in Oyo West

Local Government Area of Oyo State do not participate in sport. This may be due to social factors influencing human behaviours. These factors include parental influence, gender, economic status, sport facilities and equipment which have varying influences on sport participation and have not been examined specifically among secondary school students in Oyo West Local Government Area of Oyo State, Nigeria. Hence, the need for this study.

#### Objective of the Study

The objective of this study was to examine how social factors such as parents, sports facilities, sports equipment, self-esteem, gender and economic status influence sports participation among Secondary School Students in Oyo West Local Government Area of Oyo State.

#### Methodology

Descriptive survey research design was used for the study. The population was 10,385 students of all the 40 secondary schools in Oyo West Local Government Area of Oyo State. The sample was 642 of the students with age ranging from 11 to 21 years and consisting of 363 (56.5%) female and 275 (43.5%) male. They were selected using a multistage sampling technique that initially stratified their schools into 29 public secondary schools and 11 private secondary schools. Proportionate random sampling technique was conducted next in order to select 40% of the schools in each stratum. Thus, 17 schools (12 public schools and 5 private schools) were selected and proportionate random sampling technique was used in the final selection to sample 12% of students from each of the selected schools according to the sample used.

A questionnaire titled "Factors Influencing Sport Participation among Secondary School Students Questionnaire (FISPSSSQ)", which was developed by the researchers and validated by three experts in the Department of Human Kinetics Education, at the University of Ilorin was used for data collection. Test retest method was used to ascertain its reliability which indicated  $r = 0.76$ . The instrument was divided into sections A (that dealt with demographic data of the respondents) and B (that consisted of question

items that elicited responses on the hypotheses). A four-point Likert rating scale of Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D), and Strongly Disagree (SD) was used. The instrument was administered directly to the students in their schools within a week (five working days) after obtaining the permission of their various schools' authorities.

All the participants were properly informed and they presented with a written informed consent form that was signed by their parents before they participated in the study. The Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 20.0 software was used for data analysis. To generate variables for analysing the hypotheses, SA and SD responses were merged

to form Positive Response (PR) while D and SD responses were merged to form Negative Response (NR). Descriptive statistics of frequency and percentage were used to analyse PR and NR and the aggregate was expressed as percentage, mean PR and NR. Inferential statistics of chi-square was used for hypotheses testing with a p-value of 0.05 for ascertaining statistical significance.

## Results

Hypothesis One: Parental factor has no significant influence on sport participation among secondary school students in Oyo West Local Government Area of Oyo State, Nigeria.

**Table 1.** Chi-square Analysis on Influence of Parental Factor on Sport Participation

S/N	Parent and Sport Participation	n	Positive Response	Negative Response	$\chi^2$	df	Sig
1.	Financial support from my parent affects my participating in sport.		276 (43%)	366 (57%)			
2.	My cultural belief is an obstacle to sport participation.	642	240 (37.4%)	402 (62.6%)	505.32	9	.000
3.	My parents' occupational status influences my participation in sport.		318 (49.6%)	324 (50.5%)			
4.	Educational level of my parent encourages me to participate in sport.		503 (78.4%)	139 (21.6%)			
	Mean		334.3 (51.9%)	307.8 (47.9%)			

$p \leq 0.05$

Table 1 show chi-square analysis of the influence of parental factor on sport participation among the respondents  $n = 642$ . Mean response revealed that positive response (PR) was above average  $\bar{x} = 334.3$  (51.9%) and Negative response (NR) was  $\bar{x} = 307.8$  (47.9%). This indicated high parental influence on sport participation among the students. Furthermore, the result revealed parental factor had significant influence on sport participation of

the students  $\chi^2(9) = 505.32, p < .000$ . This led to rejection of the null hypothesis that "parental factor has no significant influence on sport participation among secondary school students in Oyo West Local Government of Oyo State, Nigeria".

Hypothesis Two: Sport facilities have no significant influence on sport participation among secondary school students in Oyo West Local Government of Oyo State, Nigeria.

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**Table 2.** Chi-Square Analysis on Influence of Sport Facilities on Sport Participation

S/N	Sport Facility and Sport Participation	n	Positive Response	Negative Response	$\chi^2$	df	Sig
1.	Inadequate sport facilities in my school influence my level of participation in sport.		462 (72%)	180 (28.1%)			
2.	Availability of some standard sport facilities in my school encourage my participation in sport.		475 (73.9%)	167 (26%)			
3.	Lack of a qualified coach in my school to train us properly on use of sport facilities reduces the level of sport participation of students.	642	386 (60.1%)	256 (39.9%)	455.18	9	.032
4.	Due to poor maintenance, sport facilities in my school are not durable and thus hinder regular participation in sport.		337 (52.5%)	305 (47.6%)			
	Mean		415 (64.6%)	227 (35.4%)			

p ≤ 0.05

Table 2 shows chi-square analysis for the influence of sport facilities on sport participation among the respondents n = 642. The mean response revealed PR  $\bar{x}$  = 415 (64.6%) was higher than NR  $\bar{x}$  = 227 (35.4%) indicating that sport facilities has a high influence on sport participation of the respondents. The chi-square result showed that sport facilities significantly influenced their participation in sport  $\chi^2(9) =$

455.18, p < 0.032. Therefore, we rejected the null hypothesis that “sport facilities have no significant influence on sport participation among secondary school students in Oyo West Local Government of Oyo State, Nigeria.

Hypothesis Three: Sport equipment has no significant influence on sport participation among secondary school students in Oyo West Local Government of Oyo State, Nigeria.

**Table 3.** Chi-Square Analysis of Influence of Sport Equipment on Sport Participation

S/N	Equipment and Sport Participation	n	Positive Response	Negative Response	$\chi^2$	df	Sig
1.	Inadequate sport equipment is a major factor discouraging my participation in sport.		462 (72%)	180 (28.1%)			
2.	A lot more students will participate in sport if the necessary sport equipment is made available in my school.	642	475 (73.9%)	167 (26%)	460.97	9	.000
3.	The number of students participating in sport is low due to frequent injury from use of substandard sport equipment.		386 (60.1%)	256 (39.9%)			
4.	Lack of proper maintenance and replacement of worn out sport equipment hinders my participation in sport.		337 (52.5%)	305 (47.6%)			
	Mean		412.3 (64.2%)	226.8 (35.3%)			

p ≤ 0.05

Table 3 shows chi-square analysis for the influence of sport equipment on sport participation among the respondents n = 642. The mean PR  $\bar{x}$  = 412.3 (64.2%) was higher than NR  $\bar{x}$  = 226.8 (35.3%). This shows that sport equipment has a high influence on their sport participation. Further analysis revealed that sport equipment was a social factor that significantly influenced the sport participation

of the respondents  $\chi^2(9) = 460.968$ ,  $p < .000$ . This led to rejection of the null hypothesis that "sport equipment has no significant influence on sport participation among secondary school students in Oyo West Local Government of Oyo State, Nigeria".

Hypothesis Four: Self-esteem has no significant influence on sport participation among secondary school students in Oyo West Local Government Area of Oyo State, Nigeria.

**Table 4.** Chi-Square Analysis of Influence of Self-Esteem on Sport Participation

S/N	Self Esteem and Sport Participation	n	Positive Response	Negative Response	$\chi^2$	d	Sig
1.	Lack of confidence to face challenges during sport affects my participation in sport		298 (46.5%)	344 (53.5%)			
2.	Lack of support from others hinders my participation in sport	642	347 (54.1%)	295 (45.9%)	331.59	9	.002
3.	I do not like to participate in sport because students who participate in sports are often unruly		193 (30.1%)	448 (69.7%)			
4.	Constant criticism from peers has led to my withdrawal from sport participation		311 (48.5%)	331 (51.5%)			
	Mean		287.3 (44.8%)	354.5 (55.2%)			

$p \leq 0.05$

Table 4 show chi-square analysis of the influence of self-esteem on sport participation among the respondents n = 642. The result revealed NR  $\bar{x}$  = 354.5 (55.2%) was higher than PR  $\bar{x}$  = 287.3 (44.8%). In addition, chi-square result indicated self-esteem has a significant influence on sport participation of the respondents  $\chi^2(9) = 331.588$   $p < 0.002$ . Based on this, the null hypothesis that "self-esteem has no significant influence on sport participation among secondary school students in Oyo West Local Government Area of Oyo State, Nigeria was rejected.

Hypothesis Five: Gender has no significant influence on sport participation among secondary school students in Oyo West Local Government of Oyo State, Nigeria. Table 5 show chi-square analysis of the influence of student's gender on their participation in sport n = 642. The mean response indicates NR  $\bar{x}$  =

347 (54%) was higher than PR  $\bar{x}$  = 295 (40%). The chi-square result revealed a significant influence of gender on sport participation among the respondents  $\chi^2(9) = 331.588$ ,  $p < .002$ . This led to the rejection of the hypothesis that "gender has no significant influence on sport participation among secondary school students in Oyo West Local Government Area of Oyo State, Nigeria.

Hypothesis Six: Economic status has no significant influence on sport participation among secondary school students in Oyo West Local Government of Oyo State, Nigeria. Table 6 show chi-square analysis of influence of economic status on sport participation among the respondents n = 642. Their mean response showed PR  $\bar{x}$  = 345.8 (53.9%) was higher than NR  $\bar{x}$  = 296.3 (46.1%), which indicates economic status has a higher influence on sport participation of the respondents. Chi-square

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result revealed that economic status significantly influenced sport participation among the respondents  $\chi^2(9) = 447.41, p < .000$ . This led to the rejection of the null hypothesis

that "economic status has no significant influence on sport participation among secondary school students in Oyo West Local Government Area of Oyo State, Nigeria."

**Table 5.** Chi-Square Analysis of the Influence of Gender on Sport Participation

S/N	Gender and Sport Participation	n	Positive Response	Negative Response	$\chi^2$	df	Sig
1.	Female students should not participate in sport at all.		248 (38.6)	394 (61.4%)			
2.	Female students that participate in sport might not be able to bear children in future.	642	211 (32.9%)	431 (67.1%)	331.59	9	.009
3.	Female students are not given the same image as the male students in sport participation.		383 (59.6%)	259 (40.3%)			
4.	Religious perception hinders the female students from participating in sport.		338 (52.7%)	304 (47.3%)			
	Mean		295 (46.0%)	347 (54.0%)			

$p \leq 0.05$

**Table 6.** Chi-Square Analysis of Influence of Economic Status on Sport Participation

S/N	Economic Status and Sport Participation	n	Positive Response	Negative Response	$\chi^2$	df	Sig
1.	High cost of equipment discourages participation in sport.		399 (62.1%)	243 (37.9%)			
2.	Financial status of one's parent could serve as hinderance to sport participation.	642	305 (47.5%)	337 (52.4%)	447.41	9	.000
3.	Low salary earning parents mostly find it difficult to give financial support towards their children's sport participation.		426 (66.4%)	216 (33.6%)			
4.	Living in a poorly designed neighbourhood reduces the level of students' participation in sport.		253 (39.4%)	389 (60.6%)			
	Mean		345.8 (53.9%)	296.3 (46.1%)			

$p \leq 0.05$

### Discussion

The benefit of sport on the wellbeing of children in modern world cannot be overemphasized. However, the findings of this study suggest that certain social factors must be properly addressed so that more secondary school students in Nigeria can benefit from sport participation. In hypothesis one, it was found that parental factors had a significant influence on low sport participation

among secondary school students in Oyo West Local Government Area of Oyo State, Nigeria. This implies that the majority of the parents of these students still hold the age long practice of discouraging children from participating in sport. Some of the concerns raised by such parents is that participation in sport causes circumscribed academic concentration, which could lead to poor academic performance among other issues. This finding is in

line with Bailey et al. [6] that the family is the point of first socialization, growth and development of the child so that parents' opinion and practices about sport influences their children's interest in sport. However, more studies have continued to support the need for students to engage in regular physical activity that can be achieved by participating in sport. Notable among them is Roy [21] who emphasised that physical activity and sport stimulates the growth of cerebral blood vessels, enhances communication across synapses, boost mood and acts as a natural antidepressant, augments memory and increases brain density, which is necessary for enhancing learning and academic performance and promoting graceful aging. This suggests that parents who want to improve their children's academic performance must encourage their children to participate in sport. They might only need to assist them in planning their schedule so that they can integrate sport and other academic tasks effectively.

Hypothesis two revealed that sport facilities significantly influenced the level of sport participation of the students. Sport facilities are crucial to development of athletic potential because they act as significant stimuli that attract or influence most young people's emotions in relation to sports. Thus, when sport facilities are not available for students to use, they might not develop much interest in sports [10]. Buttressing this submission our findings revealed that 73.9% of the respondents were encouraged to participate in sport due to availability of some standard sport facilities in their school (table 2). This often occurs especially when new sport facilities are built in schools. Unfortunately, the building of sport facilities in Nigerian secondary schools have been mostly substandard and irregular [7]; as such, they do not contribute much to reduction of the low level of sport participation among secondary school students. The findings further indicated inadequacy and poor maintenance of available sport facilities and lack of qualified coaches to utilize the sport facilities in the training of students as a hinderance to their participation in sports. This finding supports Dauda-Olajide et al. [10] who reported that the state of sport facilities in Nigeria is a major factor influencing participation, interest and performance of athletes.

The findings in hypothesis three revealed that sport equipment significantly influenced sport participation among the respondents. This implied poor provision of sport equipment was one of the factors responsible for low levels of sport participation among secondary school students in Oyo West. Their responses revealed sport facilities in their school were largely inadequate, poorly maintained, substandard and increased the risk of injury, which led to a reduction in the number of students who participated in sports. The finding corroborates the observations of Black, Johnston,

Propper and Shields [8] that most schools cut down on their sports budgets in order to meet the rising costs of management. Whereas the availability of necessary sports facilities has been regarded as a motivating factor in physical activity and sport which are personal health enhancing behavioural indicators among secondary school students leading to active living in adulthood and long-term health benefits. Therefore, attention must be given to creating a sustainable environment through provision of sport equipment and facilities in order to build a healthy society where children and adults can perform their social responsibilities appropriately.

In hypothesis four we found that self-esteem had a significant influence on sport participation of the respondents. The desire to engage in competitive events like sports is largely a reflection of perceptions of one's ability or competence [9]. Most people who come out to engage in sport have positive self-esteem and this has been reported to be one of the most powerful intrinsic motivating factors in sport participation [12]. The type of support from the environment including significant others affects individuals' self-esteem. Those with greater environmental support especially towards sport are more likely to engage and perform excellently in sports than others with little or no support. Our finding revealed that a large percentage (48.5%;  $\bar{x}$  287.3) of the respondents had poor environmental support for sport participation and this might have translated into their low level of involvement in it. This finding is corroborated by Gould et al. [13] who found that psychological barriers to students' participation in sport include role conflict, low self-esteem, or absence of role models and fear of injury.

The findings in hypothesis five showed the students' gender was one of the factors that influenced their participation in sport. This finding is similar to Ogidan [18] who observed that fewer women participate in sports than men not because women are not interested in sports but due to the long history of direct and indirect forms of discrimination and stereo-typing of women in society. Also supporting this assertion, Adesoye [3] noted that females' participation in sporting activities has for a long time been relatively low compared to men due to differential treatments based on socialized gender roles and expectations which directly influence their participation in sport. The implication of this is that potentially talented female students are discouraged from developing their sporting abilities; and the increase in the number of physically inactive students in secondary school would lead to more sedentary lifestyle among women in society with a tendency to higher risks of hypokinetic diseases and high mortality rates.

Hypothesis six revealed that economic status influenced sport participation among the



respondents. Secondary school students and amateur athletes often face the problem of poor funding, especially in Nigeria where sponsorship of athletes at this level is a major problem. According to Bailey et al. [6] the economic status of a child is the economic status of his/her parent. Most of the respondents' parents belong to the low economic status group who have to prioritize their expenditure in order to cope with the rising costs of living. Although this study did not consider how different levels of economic status influenced sport participation, it was discovered that living in poorly designed neighbourhoods reduced the level of sports participation of the respondents. This could be due to poor organisation and lack of sport facilities within the proximities of their households. Thus, even if the students were interested in sport, these economic factors could hinder their participation. This supports the findings of Kamphuis et al. [15] and Higgs, Langford and Norman (2015) that unfavourable neighbourhood, household and individual factors accounts for not participating in sport mostly among people with lower socio-economic status.

### Conclusions

Due to the low level of sport participation of secondary school students, we examined social factors influencing sport participation among secondary school students in Oyo West Local

Government Area of Oyo State, Nigeria. Based on the findings of the study, we concluded that the students' level of sports participation was significantly influenced by low parental support, insufficient sports facilities and equipment, gender imbalances in sport, economic status and low self-esteem of the students.

### Recommendations

There is need to sensitize parents and secondary school students themselves on the benefits of sport participation with emphasis on creating equal opportunities for male and female students' participation. Special recognition and awards should be given to students who perform exceptionally in sport so that it can serve as motivation towards sport participation among other students.

The school authority, government and private individuals/organisation should synergize in the provision of equipment, facilities and funds to facilitate more students' participation in sport. The school authorities and other stake holders in education should ensure that qualified teachers and coaches are employed to teach and coordinate sport affairs in secondary schools. Periodic training programmes should be organised for the teachers and coaches to update them on the current development in sports.

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**Received:** June 2019

**Accepted:** August 2019

**Published:** September 2019



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